



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

to mean "bushy," "overhanging" or "prominent brows." [See notes in *First Folio* ed., *Arden* and *Rolfe*.] The result of this interpretation is to emphasize the form of the mask that Mercutio puts on, whereas, in view of the kind of masks generally worn, I believe that Shakespeare intended by the term "beetle-brows" to direct our attention particularly to the black color of Mercutio's velvet mask. A passage from Lyly's *Midas* (1. 2. 64) gives authority for this interpretation :

Licio. She hath a beetle brow.

Petulus. What is she beetle browed? [*i. e.* "With overhanging brows." Bond]

Licio. Thou hast a beetle head? I say the brow of a beetle, a little flie, whose brow is as black as velvet.

"Brows" [see "brows," *Schmidt's Sh. Lexicon*], furthermore, has here a broader meaning than that of eye-brows; it refers to the forehead of the black mask that Mercutio announces shall blush for him. The "prominent" or "bushy" eye-brows, or even brows, could not well be the seat of the blush.

(2). The passage quoted from Lyly in the note above proves the correctness of Tiessen's conjecture [*Englische Studien*, II, 187, 1878] that "velvet" in the line,

A whitly wanton, with a velvet brow, *L. L. L.*, 3. 1. 203.

"does not refer to smoothness, but to color, and that it indicates a forehead with eye-brows sufficiently broad and black to justify a comparison to a velvet mask."

In the discussion that has been called forth by the complexion and general coloring of the "whitly wanton," Rosaline, [see *Arden* and *New Variorum L. L. L.*, 3. 1. 203, and 4. 3. 4. especially] one bit of internal evidence for the whiteness of her complexion has not been given consideration. Biron, her lover, of the four courtiers who praise the beauty of their mistresses, is the only one who praises his lady love's "white hand." Nor does he desist after praising it once. He is so deeply impressed by the fairness of her hand that he refers to it directly four times [3. 1. 159; 4. 2. 123; 5. 2. 230; 5. 2. 411] and indirectly once [4. 3. 189].

Shakespeare's frequent praise of his heroines' "white hand" as in the case of Rosaline, [see "white hand," Bartlett's *Concordance*] gives added point, furthermore, to Mason's addition to the deficient line, "She writ it," (4. 3. 22.) in *As You Like It*. [See *New Variorum As You*, (4. 3. 22), note.] His proposed substitution of "with her own fair hand," I should change, however, to "with her snow-white hand," in

view of Shakespeare's preference for the epithet "white" in cases where a lover describes the hand of his loved one. Biron uses the epithet, "snow-white," in addressing his letter to Rosaline (4. 2. 148.). Phoebe, of whose hand her lover, Silvius, is speaking here, it may be recalled, has with Rosaline "inky brows" and a "cheek of cream."

MORRIS P. TILLEY.

University of Michigan.

A BRITISH ICARUS.

To the Editor of the Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIR:—Prof. Tatlock, in his letter to *The Nation*, October 28, 1909, p. 404, upon "A British Icarus," namely the story of King Bladud as told by Layamon, barely touches upon one of the characteristic incidents in mediæval literature. He quotes Layamon, but only alludes to Geoffrey of Monmouth. Yet Geoffrey's words, ii, ch. 10, are worth quoting: "This Prince [Bladud] was a very ingenious man, and taught necromancy in his kingdom, nor did he leave off pursuing his magical operations, till he attempted to fly to the upper region of the air with wings which he had prepared, and fell down upon the temple of Apollo, in the city of Trinovantum, where he was dashed to pieces."

First, a word or two upon the name of the city. Geoffrey calls it *Trinovantum*, which Layamon renders with *London*. This is quite mediæval. *Trinovantum*, better perhaps *Trinovantium*, should be the capital of the *Trinovantes*, one of the Celtic tribes encountered by Julius Cæsar. They inhabited Essex and a part of Middlesex, that is, a region adjacent to if not included in the modern metropolitan London, but certainly quite distinct in the middle ages. How *Trinovantium* came to be used as an equivalent for the more classical *Londinium* is more than I can say. Enough that it was thus used, and even survived in Elizabethan English in the corrupted form *Troynovant*, as if New Troy. See Peele's *Farewell to Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake*:

bid stately Troynovant adieu,
Where pleasant Thames from Isis silver head
Begins her quiet glide, &c., &c.

The fabulous connection between England and Troy is another marvel of the middle ages; but I forbear.

To return to King Bladud's mishap. The story is older than Bladud, if indeed he can be said to be of any age; much older than Laya-

mon and Geoffrey. It is merely a local adaptation of the Simon Magus story as narrated in the *Apocryphal Acts of Peter and Paul*. I quote, freely abridging, from the translation by Alexander Walker, in J. & J. Clark's Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. xvi; the narrative begins at p. 272.

Simon said: Order a lofty tower to be made of wood, and of great beams, that I may go upon it, and that my angels may find me in the air; for they cannot come to me upon earth among the sinners. . . . Then Nero ordered a lofty tower to be made in the Campus Martius, and all the people and the dignities to be present at the spectacle. And on the following day . . . Nero ordered Peter and Paul to be present. [After the apostles have prayed and been questioned by Nero] Simon said: In order that thou mayst know, O emperor, that these are deceivers, as soon as ever I ascend into heaven, I will send my angels to thee, and will make thee come to me. . . .

Then Simon went up upon the tower, in the face of all, and, crowned with laurels, he stretched forth his hands and began to fly. And when Nero saw him flying, he said to Peter: This Simon is true; but thou and Paul are deceivers. . . . And Peter, looking steadfastly against Simon, said: I adjure you, ye angels of Satan, who are carrying him into the air, . . . no longer from this hour to keep him up, but to let him go. And immediately, being let go, he fell into a place called Sacra Via, that is, Holy Way, and was divided into four parts, having perished by an evil fate.

The legend of the contest in Rome between the two apostles and Simon Magus may be traced back to the beginning of the third century. It grew rapidly with time and assumed many forms. We are not to assume, however, that any of these early mediæval forms, whether Greek *πράξαις* or Latin *passio*, could have been known to Layamon, a rustic priest of West England. Exactly how he came by his knowledge on the subject has not yet been investigated. At any rate, there were English writings from which he might have learned the story. Thus, in Aelfric's *Homilies*, ed. Thorpe, I, 380, we may read his version of Simon's disastrous flight. The abbot of Evesham was for his day a learned man, occupying a very different position from that of Layamon. His account of Peter and Paul, this part at least, goes back to the Marcellus text of the *Passio*. Further, the flight is narrated in the *Blickling Homilies*, ed. Morris, p. 189, and in Wulfstan's *Homilies*, ed. Napier, p. 100. These two versions are also derived from the Latin *Passio*. Thus we see that Layamon had

more than one opportunity of learning the Simon story in his mother tongue.

I have treated the subject at some length in the hope of re-awakening interest in Layamon's *Brut* as a compilation. We have many monographs discussing Layamon's language so fully that little remains to be done. On the other hand, his story is comparatively untouched. Yet, despite his verbiage, which one soon gets used to, he has a marvelous tale to tell. There is nothing else like it in Middle English. I feel quite safe in asserting that the *Brut* is a veritable gold mine awaiting the exploiter.

J. M. HART.

Cornell University.

THE SEVEN STARS.

To the Editors of the Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—A rather curious instance of oversight of the obvious is found in H. Anders' volume on *Shakespeare's Books*.¹ Dealing with the poet's "Astronomical and Astrological Lore," he says (page 247): "THE SEVEN STARS, mentioned in *Lear*, I, v, 38; 1. *Henry IV.*, Act I, II, 16; and in 2. *Henry IV.*, Act II, IV, 201, are the Pleiads, or perhaps the Great Bear." This is, of course, the usual explanation.

The correct identification of "the seven stars," however, is found in note 3 on page 240 of the same volume, where he quotes "Batman upon Bartholome, his Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum" (1582), New Sh. Soc. Trans., 1877-79, p. 443:—"which Sunne is placed among the seaven great Starres, called the seaven Planets The Sunne is the fourth in place, as it were a King in the midst of his throne."

It is true that Falstaff uses the expression merely as an indefinite phrase, which it probably was to the general, for he excludes sun and moon and speaks of the seven stars as nothing more than a symbol of night. Nevertheless, whatever may have been in Shakespeare's mind when he referred to these luminaries, a point that can hardly be determined, the seven stars had certainly been widely known, feared, and trusted ever since the days of Babylonian astrology.

LEWIS F. MOTT.

College of the City of New York.

¹ *Schriften der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, I.